IMAM GHAZALI

Mercy

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On the virtue of showing mercy

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "None but the person who is merciful shall enter Paradise." The Companions y said: "O Messenger of Allâh! All of us are merciful." He replied: "A merciful person is not he who shows mercy to himself alone. Rather, a merciful person is he who shows mercy to himself and to others as well." The meaning of showing "mercy to himself" is that he shows mercy to himself from the punishment of Allâh ﷻ by abstaining from sins, repenting when committing them, doing good deeds, and being sincere in doing good deeds. The meaning of showing mercy to others is that the person should not strive to harm a fellow Muslim.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "A true Muslim is he from whose hands and tongue people are safe." A person should also show mercy to animals. He should not impose upon them tasks that are beyond their capability.

It is related that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "While a person was travelling on a road, severe thirst overtook him. He found a well in which he descended and drank thereof. He then came out and saw a dog panting out of thirst. He thought to himself: 'This dog is experiencing the same thirst that I had experienced.' He therefore filled his leather sock with water, held it by his mouth and gave the water to the dog. Allâh ﷻ was grateful for this act of his and therefore forgave him." The Companions asked: "O Messenger of Allâh! Are we also rewarded for showing kindness towards animals?!" He replied: "Reward can be obtained from every living creature."

Anas ibn Mâlik ؓ narrates: "While 'Umar ؓ was patrolling at night, he passed by a group of travellers who had stopped over. He feared that someone might try to steal from them. He met 'Abd ar-Rahmân ibn 'Auf ؓ and so the latter asked him: "What has brought you out at this hour, O Leader of the Believers?" He replied: "I passed by a group of travellers who have stopped over. I thought to myself that if they spent the night here, they would fall asleep. I fear that someone might try to steal from them. Let's go

and keep guard for them." They proceeded and sat close to the group of travellers, guarding them until when dawn broke, 'Umar ﷺ announced: O group of travellers! Prepare for salâh. When he saw them moving about and making preparation, he turned and left." It is our duty to emulate the Companions y for Allâh ﷻ praises them by saying that they show mercy to each other. They used to show mercy to the Muslims and to the entire creation. They even showed mercy to the unbelievers who were under their protection (the *dhimmîs*).

It is related that 'Umar ﷺ saw a *dhimmî* going around begging. This person was a very old man, so 'Umar ﷺ said to him: "We have not been just to you. We took taxes from you as long as you were young. Now that you have gone old, we have abandoned you." 'Umar ﷺ then ordered that the person's daily food be provided from the Islamic treasury (*bayt al-mâl*).

Al-Hasan *rahimahullâh* narrates that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "The generous persons of my *ummah* will not enter Paradise merely due to excessive salâh and fasting. Rather, they will enter Paradise because of the purity of their chests, their generosity and their mercy towards all the Muslims."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Those who show mercy are shown mercy by the Merciful [Allâh]. Show mercy to those who are on earth, the being [Allâh] who is in the heavens will show mercy to you."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "The person who does not show mercy will not have mercy shown to him. The person who does not forgive will not be forgiven."

Mâlik ibn Anas ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "There are four rights which Muslims have over you: you help the one who does good, you seek forgiveness for the one who commits a crime, you visit the one who is ill, you love the one who is repentant."

It is related that Mûsâ ﷺ asked: "O my Sustainer! On what basis did You make me Your chosen one?" Allâh ﷻ replied: "On account of the mercy

you show to My creation."

It is related that Abû Dardâ' ﷺ used to follow some children and purchase from them the little birds which they had captured. He would then release these birds and say: "Go and live."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "The similitude of Muslims in their mutual mercy towards each other, their mutual love for each other and their mutual relationships with each other is like that of a body. If one part of the body complains, the entire body responds with fever and sleeplessness."

An ardent worshipper from the Banî Isrâ'îl passed by a sand-hill. At that time, the Banî Isrâ'îl was experiencing intense hunger. He therefore wished to himself that had this sand-hill been flour, it would have satiated the hunger of the Banî Isrâ'îl. Allâh ﷻ revealed to a Prophet of the Banî Isrâ'îl saying: "Go and say to such and such person that Allâh ﷻ has made incumbent upon you a certain reward equivalent to that sand-hill had it turned into flour and your satiating the hunger of the people." It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "The intention of a believer is better than his deeds."

It is related that one day 'Îsâ ﷺ came out and met Satan who had some honey in one hand and ash in the other. So he asked him: "What are you doing with this honey and ash, O enemy of Allâh?" He replied: "This honey I place on the mouths of those engaged in back-biting so that they may continue in this act. As for the ash, I smear it on the faces of orphans so that people abhor them."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "When an orphan is struck, the throne of the Merciful [Allâh] trembles on account of the orphan's crying. Allâh ﷻ then says: 'O My angels! Who has caused this child whose father has been buried in the ground to cry?'"

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "When a person gives refuge to an orphan by giving him food and drink, Allâh ﷻ makes Paradise incumbent

on such a person."

It is related in *Raudah al-'Ulamâ'* that when Ibrâhîm ﷺ intended to eat, he would walk a mile or two in search of someone who would eat with him. One day, 'Alî ﷺ began crying. Someone asked him the reason, so he replied: "No guest has come to me for the past seven days. I therefore fear that Allâh ﷻ has disgraced me."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "The person who feeds a hungry person solely for the pleasure of Allâh ﷻ, Paradise becomes incumbent on him. The person who refuses food to a hungry person, Allâh ﷻ refuses him His grace on the day of resurrection and punishes him in the Hell-fire."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "A generous person is close to Allâh, close to Paradise, close to people, far from the Hell-fire. A miserly person is far from Allâh, far from Paradise, far from people, close to the Hell-fire."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "An ignorant but generous person is more beloved to Allâh ﷻ than an ardent worshipper who is miserly."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "When the day of resurrection takes place, four persons will enter Paradise without any reckoning: (1) an *'âlim* who practises on his knowledge, (2) a person who performs the pilgrimage and does not commit any obscenity or act of disobedience till he dies, (3) a martyr who fights on the battlefield in order to raise the authority of Islam, (4) a generous person who earned wealth from lawful sources and spent it in the cause of Allâh ﷻ without any show. These four will argue with each other as to which of them should go first into Paradise."

Ibn 'Abbâs ﷺ narrates that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Allâh ﷻ has special servants whom He showers with bounties for the benefit of people. The person who acts miserly in distributing these bounties to the people, Allâh ﷻ takes away those bounties from him and hands them over to someone else."

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Generosity is one of the trees of Paradise with its branches reaching down to earth. The one who holds on to one of its branches, that branch guides him towards Paradise.”

Jâbir رضي الله عنه narrates: Someone asked: “O Messenger of Allâh! Which deeds are the best?” He replied: “Patience and generosity.”

Al-Miqdâm ibn Shurayh narrates from his father who narrates from his grandfather who said: “I asked: ‘O Messenger of Allâh! Show me an act that would admit me into Paradise.’ He replied: ‘From among the things that make the forgiveness [of Allâh ﷻ] incumbent is feeding food [to people], spreading the greeting of peace, and speaking good words.”